



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

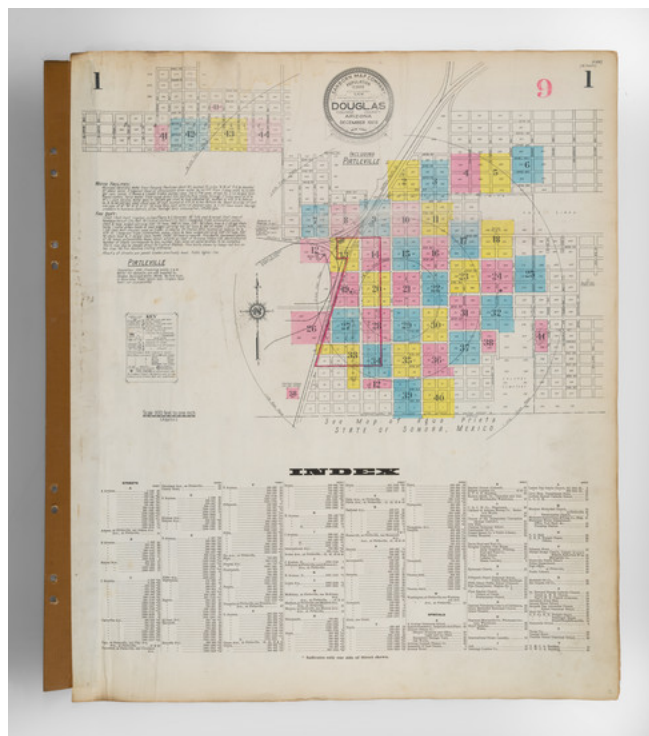
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(Arizona Fire Insurance Atlas) Douglas Cochise County Arizona, Including Pirtleville

Stock#: 97558
Map Maker: Sanborn Map Company
Date: 1929
Place: New York
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: See Description
Size: 21.5 x 25.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Detailed Mapping of Douglas, Arizona in the 1920s

Including Unincorporated Mexican Neighborhood of Pirtleville

A fire insurance atlas of Douglas and Pirtleville, Arizona, produced by the Sanborn Map Company in December 1929. This atlas offers perhaps the most detailed record of the built environment of the burgeoning Arizona border town for the time. Comprising 46 unbound sheets with hand-colored maps, the atlas was originally made as a specialized tool for insurance company underwriters in determining the degree of fire risk associated with any property shown therein. Today it is an unrivaled visual record of Douglas's urban landscape in the 1920s, when the town had a population of 12,500.

Executed with a scale 50 feet to an inch, the atlas shows every building in Douglas and Pirtleville, with block-by-block, street-by-street, structure-by-structure, color-coded representations. Use of each structure is given: dwelling, grocery, storage, lumber yard, movie theater, church, hardware, water tower, etc., often recording the name of the individual business owner. Color coding denotes building material. Notably there were a large number of adobe structures in Douglas, including tenements, individual



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dwellings, and a Mexican movie theatre.

In the 1920s, Douglas, Arizona served as a bustling border town situated adjacent to Agua Prieta, Mexico. During this period, it was known for its vibrant economic activities, which included mining and cattle ranching, as well as its role as a significant port of entry between the United States and Mexico. The town's proximity to the Mexican border made it a focal point for trade, migration, and cultural exchange, but it also led to complexities related to law enforcement and border security. The decade was marked by the dynamics of the Mexican Revolution, Prohibition, and the burgeoning copper mining industry (notably through the operations of the Phelps-Dodge Co.), all of which had substantial impacts on Douglas and its community.

Pirtleville: an Island of Mexican American Culture in Douglas

According to historian Josiah Heyman, the unincorporated community of Pirtleville (covered in the present atlas), just outside the city limits of Douglas, grew into an independent community characterized by Mexican-owned businesses and celebrations of Mexican Fiestas Patrias. A Mexican mutual-aid society, the Sociedad Mutualista de Obreros Mexicanos, was established in 1923, to self assist Mexican workers from the smelters, particularly when illness or injury struck:

*In a sea of discrimination, Pirtleville was an island of cultural and social self-expression for Mexican Americans, echoes of which can still be heard today... Pirtleville was popular with Mexican Americans for three reasons. Lying just south of the smelters, it was much easier to walk to work from there than from Douglas. Land was inexpensive. In Pirtleville a house lot cost about fifty dollars whereas in Douglas, one could cost two hundred dollars or more... Mexican Americans were more often homeowners in Pirtleville and renters in Douglas.... Pirtleville was the only place where Hispanics and non-Hispanics met on a relatively equal footing. Pirtleville supported a number of Mexican businesses....there were roughly twelve small stores in Pirtleville around 1920, all of them owned by Mexicans... Ramon Jordan's uncle Luis had a woodyard and a butcher shop... Although there were Mexican businesses inside Douglas, it appears that Pirtleville offered more opportunity for Mexican American businesses, possibly because it sheltered them from the large corporate and Jewish and Lebanese immigrant businesses of the city - Oral History of the Mexican American Community of Douglas, Arizona, 1901-1942, *Journal of the Southwest*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Summer, 1993), page 195.*

Here follows a selection of the structures and sites shown in the atlas:

- Apache Powder Co.
- Arizona Gypsum Plaster Co.



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- Ave. A. Grammar School
- Calumet & Arizona Mining Co. Reduction Works, Copper Smelter (page 46, entire sheet)
- Clawson Grammar School
- Douglas Country Club House
- Douglas Daily Dispatch
- Hotel Gadsden
- Latter Day Saints Church
- Levy Bros. Department Store
- Mexican Methodist Church
- Mexican Presbyterian Church
- Mexican Theatre & Movies (Adobe)
- Phelps-Dodge Corp. Copper Queen Branch Reduction Works (page 45, entire sheet)
- Southern Pacific Railroad Shop & Round House
- St. Bernard's Church
- Sunnyside School
- Texas Company
- Twelfth Street Grammar School

Rarity

The Douglas, Arizona Sanborn atlas is rare in the market. OCLC locates editions of 1904, 1909, 1914, and 1929 at the University of Arizona. We also note another example of the 1929 edition held at California State Northridge. The Library of Congress has digitized editions of 1904, 1924, 1914, 1929, and 1929 (updated to 1947).

Detailed Condition:

Original hand-color. Unbound, with sheets mounted on alternating tabs. 46 sheets, including index page. Complete. Trace of dust soiling to edges of first page. Overall very clean and nice. Small ink stamp of Liverpool and London and Globe Ins. Co. on first page.